

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 00286 040953Z

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 0286

USIA FOR IEU JSADLIK

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, CZ

SUBJECT: EXCHANGES AGREEMENT

1. ZANTOVSKY (HEAD SIXTH DEPT MFA) ASKED CHARGE IN FEB 3 TO PROPOSE BEGINNING OF TALKS ON EXCHANGES AGREEMENT FEB 25.

2. ZANTOVSKY EXPLAINED THAT MAIN MOTIVE OF PROPOSAL WAS TO KEEP SOME MOEMNTUM GOING. SINCE ASSISTANT SECRETARY HARTMAN HAD PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS FOR EXCAHNGES AGREEMENT, AND US SIDE HAD PRESENTED DRAFT, CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE DID NOT WISH TO SEE MATTER LONG DELAYED, PARTAICULARLY SINCE THEY BELIEVED, IN CSCE CONTEXT, THAT TIME WAS RIPE FOR EXPANSION OF EX-CHANGES BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

3. ZANTOVSKY SUGGESTED THAT RATHER THAN OPENING FORMAL, FULL-SCALE NEGOTIATIONS, WE MIGHT CONSIDER "NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH NORMAL DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS," OR "DELIVERATIONS OF EXPERTS," SIMILAR TO PRE-LIMINARY TALKS HE HAD CONDUCTED WITH WORTZEL OF US EMBASSY IN 1974. (THESE WERE STOPPED FROM US INITIATIVE IN ORDER TO GIVE FULL ATTENTION TO CLAIMS/GOLD NEGOTIATIONS.) THUS NEGOTIATIONS NEED NOT BE ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY, AND "EXPERTS" COULD WORK ON BOTH DRAFTS (NEW US DRAFT PRESENTED CHARGE

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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 00286 040953Z

OCTOBER 17 AND OLD CSSR DRAFT FOR TWO AGREEMENTS

PRESENTED IN 1974); FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS NEED NOT START UNTIL BOTH SIDES WERE READY FOR RELATIVELY SHORT PROCESS OF FINAL DRAFTING OF AGREEMENT. UNDER QUERYING OF CHARGE, IT SEEMED THAT CZECHOSLOVAK SIDE WOULD FIND SOME ADVANTAGE TO INFORMAL TALKS BECAUSE OF THE IMMENSE COMPLICATIONS OF CZECH-SLOVAK FEDERALISM (THERE IS NO FEDERAL MINISTRY OF CULTURE OR EDUCATION, SO THAT BRATISLAVA HAS TO BE BROUGHT IN ON FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS). ZANOTVSKY SAID ZEMLA, FORMER AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY HEAD OF MFA LEGAL DEPARTMENT, WAS PREPARED TO HEAD GOC TEAM IN THESE PRELIMINARY TALKS OR "DELIBERATIONS OF EXPERTS."

4. IN REPLY, CHARGE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR GOC INTEREST IN KEEPING BALL ROLLING. HE NOTED HOWEVER THAT EMBASSY HAD ALREADY REPORTED SPACIL'S STATEMENT OF JAN 26 THAT GOC WAS READY FOR FORMAL TALKS, AND HE FEARED A PROPOSAL TO BEGIN OR RENEW INFORMAL TALKS AT THIS STAGE MIGHT CUT ACROSS WORK ALREADY IN PROGRESS. ANOTHER POSSIBLE COMPLICATING FACTOR WAS NAMING OF NEW US AMBASSADOR, WHICH CHARGE HOPED WOULD TAKE PLACE FAIRLY SOON. IT WAS ALSO TRUE, CHARGE SAID, THAT WE WERE ENGAGED IN FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH HUNGARY AND BULGARIA, AND DEPARTMENT MIGHT WELL WISH TO HAVE TALKS HERE ON SAME FOOTING. THEREFORE, CHARGE SAID, ANSWER MIGHT BE "NO" FROM WASHINGTON TO PROPOSAL FOR INFORMAL TALKS, MAINLY BECAUSE FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS SEEMED ABOUT READY TO BEGIN. HOWEVER, EMBASSY WAS READY TO WROK IN ANY FASHION SUITABLE TO BOTH SIDES, AND HE WOULD REPORT THIS PROPOSAL PROMPTLY.

5. ZANTOVSKY SAID CZECH SIDE WAS NOT HUNG UP OVER FORM NEGOTIATIONS TOOK, THEY WERE MERELY TRYING TO BE HELPFUL. THEY WERE READY FOR NEGOTATIONS IN ANY FORM US SIDE PREFERRED. IN FACT, HE ADDED, BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANDING EXCHANGES IN NEAR FUTURE, HE WOULD SAY THERE WAS MORE THAN READINESS, THERE WAS EAGERNESS ON CZECH SIDE.

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PAGE 03 PRAGUE 00286 040953Z

6. COMMENT. EMBASSY DOES NOT HAVE ANY STRONG RECOMMENDATION TO MAKE ON THIS PROPOSAL: WE CAN GO EITHER WAY. IF TALKS WOULD BE LESS CUMBERSOME UNDER HEADING OF "DELIBERATIONS OF EXPERTS," THIS MIGHT BE HANDY WAY TO CLEAR AWAY ALL THE UNDERBRUSH AND GET THE AGREEMENT READY TO SIGN. IT MIGHT ALSO BE A WAY TO GET AROUND AWAITING FOR A NEW AMBASSADOR TO BE NAMED BEFORE STARTING FORMAL TALKS (WHICH

MAY BE WHAT THE CZECHS HAVE IN MIND). EMBASSY'S
MAIN INTEREST IS IN AVOIDING UNDUE DELAY, SINCE
THIS IS ABOUT THE ONLY ACTIVE AVENUE IN BILATERAL
RELATIONS RIGHT NOW. THEREFORE WE SUGGEST THAT IF
APPROVAL OF FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS IN NEAR FUTURE IS
AT HAND, AND IT WOULD COMPLICATE MATTERS TO
CHANGE THAT, THEN WE PROCEED WITH FORMAL TALKS. IF
THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DELAY IN FORMAL TALKS, WE
RECOMMEND ACCEPTING CZECH OFFER OF INFORMAL NEGOTIATIONS OF EXPERTS.
PERRY

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